



August 2007

Welcome to the twenty seventh edition of the **MassGIS GISette**, a bi-monthly newsletter e-mailed to over 1500 of our users and partner agencies to keep them informed of data updates, GIS events, and on-going technology developments. This newsletter will not replace more focused e-mails that many of you currently receive. A page on our website has been created for the [GISette](#). There you will find back issues of the GISette and an [online subscription form](#).

While our primary intent in publishing the GISette is to disseminate information related to MassGIS initiatives and data development in particular, we also see the GISette as a means of communicating public agency GIS news. So we encourage readers to send in updates or announcements concerning public agencies that they would like included in the GISette. We particularly want to encourage submission of announcements concerning data development projects. Announcements should be sent to Paul Nutting at paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

Download Assessors Parcel Data

One of the more common data requests we receive from a variety of customers from all over the country is for digital parcel data covering some or all of Massachusetts' 351 municipalities. In Massachusetts and other New England states, government functions, including assessor parcel mapping, that occur elsewhere in the United States at the County level, are the responsibility of cities and towns. Thus, each of Massachusetts' 351 municipalities is responsible for creating and maintaining its respective parcel maps. The quality of existing parcel mapping is highly variable from town to town; it ranges from conventional mylar maps, to CADD files, to GIS files of varying quality and consistency, to files that comply with the [MassGIS Parcel Standard](#) Level II. There is no state requirement that assessor parcel maps exist in a digital format. What we know about the status of digital parcel mapping on a community-by-community basis can be found on the [digital parcel status map](#). MassGIS does not have a comprehensive catalogue of all the available digital parcel data. We do have parcel data for 46 cities and towns that comply with Level II of the parcel standard. We also have parcel data for a large number of communities that we have collected for use on internal projects – what we refer to as “Level 0” parcel data. Unfortunately, although they are typically the best available data, many of these digital files are out-of-date or of poor quality.

MassGIS is distributing parcel data on behalf of a number of communities, thus saving them the trouble of responding to requests for this data set. MassGIS is willing to perform this service for any community. The only pre-requisite is that we be provided with a current copy of the parcel data at least annually.

If any community is interested in having MassGIS distribute their parcel data, please

contact Paul Nutting at paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

Massachusetts Geographic Information Council Seminars

We are currently planning the full season of Massachusetts Geographic Information Council Seminars and would like some feedback and assistance with the proposed topics. We would also entertain additional topics if they are accompanied by at least one suggested speaker who would be *likely* to participate.

- We've confirmed a set of speakers for a session in Central MA for January with a tentative title of 3D Visualization for Community Development and Planning.
- We plan on teaming with colleagues from the USGS to present advancements in hydro modeling tools.
- Other state agencies are beginning to use our webservices and along with some of our staff we will present some of these projects and how to create map mashups using our data.

There are four topics we'd like to present, but planning for those are in the nascent stages and we seek assistance in fleshing these out.

- Mobile field data collection is increasingly used in municipal and private settings, and would make a timely topic with a municipal focus.
- The overlap of surveying and GIS is becoming more common and we'd like to visit this topic.
- The cost of acquiring LiDAR data has been coming down to the point that municipalities are acquiring it to map building footprints and other infrastructure. It would be helpful to municipalities if we could present some case studies.
- Many entities are realizing that a common Linear Referencing System (LRS) would be useful to their operations. The Executive Office of Transportation is putting great effort into improving their LRS and would be central to any discussion of this topic.

For further information about the Massachusetts Geographic Information Council Seminar Series, to view previous presentations or to receive email announcements visit the [MGICSS web page](#).

Standard Frame Sizes for Orthophoto Maps

Since many of our customers who are purchasing [orthophoto maps](#) would like to frame them, we now have several sizes available, which will fit into standard picture or poster frames. These make thoughtful housewarming gifts for people relocating to a new town and can have a personalized title. The standard sizes are 11" x 17", 17" x 22", 24" x 36", and 36" x 44". The maps cost \$40 for the first copy and additional copies of the *same* map ordered at the *same* time are \$5.

Database Updates

- **New [Wind Power Density at 50m](#) Layer** - 8/22/2007
This datalayer is a vector version of the AWS Truewind, LLC, Massachusetts Technology Collaborative wind power density raster layer. It represents wind power density in watts per square mile at an elevation of 50 meters.

- **New [Community Health Centers](#) Layer** - 8/21/2007
This point datalayer contains the location of community health centers (CHCs) in Massachusetts. A community health center is a non-profit community-based organization that offers comprehensive primary and preventive health care, including medical, social and/or mental health services, to anyone in need regardless of their medical status, ability to pay, culture or ethnicity. The layer was produced by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) Bureau of Environmental Health (BEH) GIS program.
- **New [Land Use Summary Statistics](#)** - 8/20/2007
This second set of Land Use Summary Statistics aggregates the 21-class land use into six categories -- Agriculture, Forest, Open Land, Recreation, Urban, and Water. Excel tables with acreage and change stats are available for the state and each county and town.
- **[Schools Layers](#) Updated** - 8/20/2007
The locations of six schools were refined using ortho imagery.
- **New [Multi-part Counties](#) Layer** - 8/9/2007
This layer is a simplified version of the boundaries of the 14 counties in the state, with one attribute table record for each county.
- **NHESP CVP Regulatory Layer Updated** - 8/8/2007
NHESP has updated the [Certified Vernal Pools](#) (July 2007) layer.
- **[Aquifers Layers](#) Updated** - 7/31/2007
The boundaries of two polygons in the town of Colrain were modified for both the arc and polygon layers.
- **New [USGS Historical Coastal Topographic Map Image](#) Layer** - 7/27/2007
This layer is a digital raster graphic of the historical (1890s to early 1900s) 15-minute USGS topographic quadrangle maps of coastal towns in Massachusetts.
- **[MEPA ENF Points Layer](#) Updated** - 7/24/2007
Point layers were added for 2007 Q1 and Q2.
- **[Colleges and Universities Layer](#) Updated** - 7/2/2007
Two points were added for the Lynn and Beverly campuses of North Shore Community College.
- **New [Prime Forest Land](#) Layer** - 6/27/2007
Created using soils data and other layers, the Prime Forest Land layer represents potentially forested land, classified into nine different categories based on potential average timber productivity of white pine and red oak.
- **New [Forest Stewardship Program Properties](#) Layer** - 6/27/2007
This layer contains the boundaries of all properties which have plans under the Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program.

ArcMap Tips

Pause Drawing in Layout View

When creating a layout, it can become extremely time consuming if you have to wait for your data frame to redraw every time you add or move another layout element. To avoid this, double click the data frame in the legend to access its properties, then under the frame tab, check the "draft mode"-just show frame box.

Accessing the Data View within the Layout View

The early versions of ArcMap required you to switch back to the data view if you were in the layout and realized you needed to make an edit to the data. A fix was added a while back but some users do not know about it. In the layout view, simply double click the data frame and the border will turn from a solid to a hatched line. This technique is especially useful when labeling.

Announcements

[NEARC 2007](#) Northeast ARC Users Group Conference in Burlington, Vermont, November 4 through 7, 2007.

Any comments or suggestions about the GISette are welcomed paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

MassGIS-The Commonwealth's Office of Geographic and Environmental Information is located within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and is charged with the collection, enhancement, storage and dissemination of the Commonwealth's geographic data.

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